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Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Darren **Hansen** (Australia)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" was included in the provisional agenda of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 70/237 of 23 December 2015.

2. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2016, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 1st meeting, on 30 September 2016, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 89 to 105. At its 2nd to 9th meetings, from 3 to 7 and from 10 to 12 October, the Committee held a general debate on those items. At its 8th meeting, on 11 October, the Committee had an exchange with the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs on follow-up of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Committee at previous sessions and presentation of reports. At its 10th meeting, on 13 October, the Committee had an exchange with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and other high-level officials in the field of arms control and disarmament. The Committee also held 13 meetings (10th to 22nd), on 13 and 14, from 17 to 21 and from 24 to 27 October, for thematic discussions and panel exchanges with independent experts. At those meetings, as well as during the action phase, draft resolutions were introduced and considered.

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The Committee took action on all draft resolutions and decisions at the 22nd to 26th meetings, on 27 and 28 October and from 31 October to 2 November.[1]

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (A/71/172).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.17

5. At the 19th meeting, on 24 October, the representative of the Russian Federation, on behalf of Angola, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" (A/C.1/71/L.17). Subsequently, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, the Sudan, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At its 25th meeting, on 1 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/71/L.17 by a recorded vote of 177 to none, with 1 abstention (see para. 7). The voting was as follows:[2]

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India,

[1] For an account of the Committee's discussion of the item, see A/C.1/71/PV.2, A/C.1/71/PV.3, A/C.1/71/PV.4, A/C.1/71/PV.5, A/C.1/71/PV.6, A/C.1/71/PV.7, A/C.1/71/PV.8, A/C.1/71/PV.9, A/C.1/71/PV.10, A/C.1/71/PV.11, A/C.1/71/PV.12, A/C.1/71/PV.13, A/C.1/71/PV.14, A/C.1/71/PV.15, A/C.1/71/PV.16, A/C.1/71/PV.17, A/C.1/71/PV.18, A/C.1/71/PV.19, A/C.1/71/PV.20, A/C.1/71/PV.21, A/C.1/71/PV.22, A/C.1/71/PV.23, A/C.1/71/PV.24, A/C.1/71/PV.25 and A/C.1/71/PV.26.

[2] The delegations of Azerbaijan and Benin subsequently informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Ukraine.

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/70 of 4 December 1998, 54/49 of 1 December 1999, 55/28 of 20 November 2000, 56/19 of 29 November 2001, 57/53 of 22 November 2002, 58/32 of 8 December 2003, 59/61 of 3 December 2004, 60/45 of 8 December 2005, 61/54 of 6 December 2006, 62/17 of 5 December 2007, 63/37 of 2 December 2008, 64/25 of 2 December 2009, 65/41 of 8 December 2010, 66/24 of 2 December 2011, 67/27 of 3 December 2012, 68/243 of 27 December 2013, 69/28 of 2 December 2014 and 70/237 of 23 December 2015,

Recalling also its resolutions on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, in which, inter alia, it recognized that scientific and technological developments could have both civilian and military applications and that progress in science and technology for civilian applications needed to be maintained and encouraged,

Bearing in mind the results of the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[1] and recalling its resolution 70/125 of 16 December 2015,

Noting that considerable progress has been achieved in developing and applying the latest information technologies and means of telecommunication,

Affirming that it sees in this process the broadest positive opportunities for the further development of civilization, the expansion of opportunities for cooperation for the common good of all States, the enhancement of the creative potential of humankind and additional improvements in the circulation of information in the global community,

Noting that the dissemination and use of information technologies and means affect the interests of the entire international community and that optimum effectiveness is enhanced by broad international cooperation,

Expressing concern that these technologies and means can potentially be used for purposes that are inconsistent with the objectives of maintaining international stability and security and may adversely affect the integrity of the infrastructure of States to the detriment of their security in both civil and military fields,

Considering that it is necessary to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes,

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[1] See A/C.2/59/3 and A/60/687.

Noting the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the use of information and communications technologies,

Noting also the contribution of those Member States that have submitted their assessments on issues of information security to the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 3 of resolutions 53/70, 54/49, 55/28, 56/19, 57/53, 58/32, 59/61, 60/45, 61/54, 62/17, 63/37, 64/25, 65/41, 66/24, 67/27, 68/243, 69/28 and 70/237,

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General containing those assessments,[2]

Considering that the assessments of Member States contained in the reports of the Secretary-General have contributed to a better understanding of the substance of issues of international information security and related notions,

Welcoming the effective work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and the relevant outcome report transmitted by the Secretary-General,[3]

Stressing the importance of the assessments and recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts,

Welcoming the conclusions of the Group of Governmental Experts, in its 2013[4] and 2015[3] reports, that international law, and in particular the Charter of the United Nations, is applicable and essential to maintaining peace and stability and promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful information and communications technology environment, that voluntary and non-binding norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of States in the use of information and communications technologies can reduce risks to international peace, security and stability, and that, given the unique attributes of such technologies, additional norms can be developed over time,

1. *Calls upon* Member States:

(a) To be guided in their use of information and communications technologies by the 2015 report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security;[3]

(b) To promote further, at multilateral levels, the consideration of existing and potential threats in the field of information security, as well as possible strategies to address the threats emerging in this field, consistent with the need to preserve the free flow of information;

2. *Considers* that the purpose of such measures could be served through further examination of relevant international concepts aimed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunications systems;

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[2] A/54/213, A/55/140 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/56/164 and Add.1, A/57/166 and Add.1, A/58/373, A/59/116 and Add.1, A/60/95 and Add.1, A/61/161 and Add.1, A/62/98 and Add.1, A/64/129 and Add.1, A/65/154, A/66/152 and Add.1, A/67/167, A/68/156 and Add.1, A/69/112 and Add.1, A/70/172 and Add.1 and A/71/172.

[3] A/70/174.

[4] A/68/98.

3. *Invites* all Member States, taking into account the assessments and recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts, to continue to inform the Secretary-General of their views and assessments on the following questions:

(a) General appreciation of the issues of information security;

(b) Efforts taken at the national level to strengthen information security and promote international cooperation in this field;

(c) The content of the concepts mentioned in paragraph 2 above;

(d) Possible measures that could be taken by the international community to strengthen information security at the global level;

4. *Welcomes* the commencement of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, established by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 70/237 on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, which, in accordance with its mandate, taking into account the assessments and recommendations contained in the above-mentioned report, should continue to study, with a view to promoting common understandings, existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them and how international law applies to the use of information and communications technologies by States, as well as norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour of States, confidence-building measures and capacity-building and the concepts referred to in paragraph 2 above, and submit a report on the results of the study to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the item entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".